

Tips for Using the VAD as a Planning Tool

- Go over the VAD as part of your OSOT, so both you and members are aware of what their activities, expected outcomes, and deadlines are for the service term.
- Keep bringing it out in the first few weeks so that you and the member can form a creative team taking a big-picture look at the project.
- Set completion dates for each activity.
- If necessary, articulate what the supervisor needs to do to help the VISTA meet his or her goals.
- If the project takes a new direction, use the completed VAD in conjunction with a blank one. Copy the tasks from the first one that are still relevant, then add the new directions, while reinforcing the positive work being accomplished by the member. Congratulate the member on the work accomplished and what he or she discovered while trying what was on the form. Then chart a new direction.
- When the member accomplishes major activities listed in the VAD, take him or her to lunch – celebrate success!
- Take pictures of the project along the way. The VISTA can use the images with the VAD to create success stories of his or her service.
- Encourage members to journal in relation to the activities listed. You can use their reflections for reporting.

The more you use this tool, the more time you save and the more likely members are to understand how the VAD guides their work.

Repeatedly referring to the VAD is also a great way of keeping yourself up to date.

It also allows you to help your members develop direction and momentum with their projects. However, if you only use it at the beginning, take it out again during the last month to see:

- The direction the project ultimately followed
- What was accomplished
- What the member learned from the changes to the original plan